

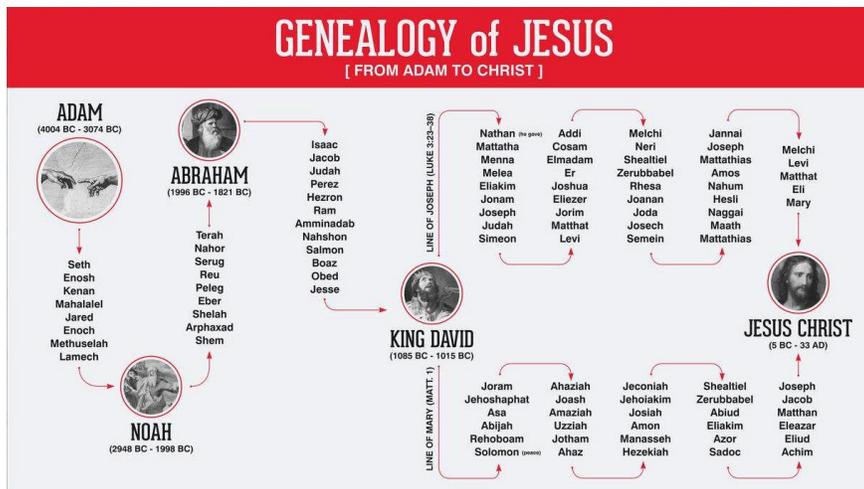
# THE GENEALOGY OF SHEM

## INTRODUCTION

- The *toledoth* of Shem in Gen 11:10-26 connects Abraham with Noah, making it an important genealogy in tracing the Messianic line in the OT
- The beginning of the next *toledoth* is also included in this chapter (the genealogy of Terah), making the connection to Abraham

Section	Topic	Reference
I.	Book Preface: Creation Narrative	1:1–2:3
II.	The Genealogy of the Heavens and the Earth	2:4–4:26
III.	The Book of the Genealogy of Adam	5:1–6:8
IV.	The Genealogy of Noah And the Genealogy of Noah's Sons	6:9–9:29 10:1–11:9
V.	The Genealogy of Shem And the Genealogy of Terah And the Genealogy of Ishmael And the Genealogy of Isaac And the Genealogy of Esau	11:10–26 11:27–25:11 25:12–18 25:19–35:29 36:1–8; 36:9–37:1
VI.	The Genealogy of Jacob	37:2–50:26

- After the dispersion of people at Babel, which resulted in many different languages and nations, God chose to deal with one line...the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...the line through which Messiah would come



- Another possible reason for Genesis 10 being placed before Genesis 11: “The story of the tower also looks ahead by anticipating the role that Abram (12:1–3) will play in restoring the blessing to the dispersed nations. By placing the Tower of Babel incident just prior to the stories of Abram and his descendants, the biblical writer is suggesting, in the first place, that post-flood humanity is as wicked as pre-flood humanity. Rather than sending something as devastating as a flood to annihilate mankind, however, God now places His hope in a covenant with Abraham as a powerful solution to humanity’s sinfulness. This problem (*Genesis 11*) and solution (*Genesis 12*) are brought into immediate juxtaposition, and the forcefulness of this structural move would have been lost had Genesis 10 intervened between the two.”<sup>1</sup>
- As Genesis 1-11 closes, the sin of mankind is the major obstacle to God’s kingdom program

<sup>1</sup> Keith Krell, quoted in “The Order of Nations,” <https://answersingenesis.org/contradictions-in-the-bible/the-order-of-nations/>

## THE GENEALOGIES

### The Line of Shem

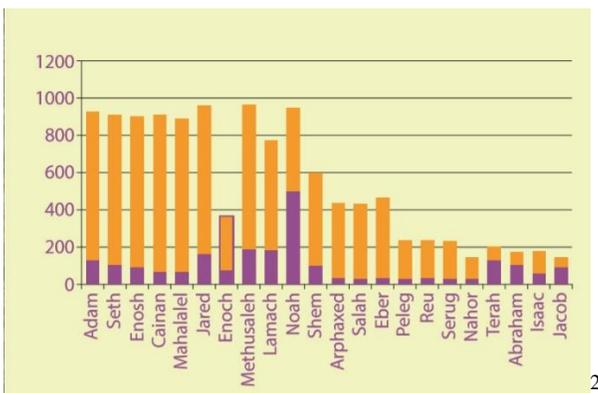
**Genesis 11:10-26** ~ These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood; 11 and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters. 12 Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah; 13 and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters. 14 Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber; 15 and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters. 16 Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg; 17 and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters. 18 Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu; 19 and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters. 20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug; 21 and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters. 22 Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor; 23 and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters. 24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah; 25 and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters. 26 Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

- After giving the genealogies of the three sons of Noah in Gen 10, here Moses provides simply the line of Shem, showing how the seed line progressed from Shem
- After the segmented genealogy of Gen 10 (a horizontal one), we return to a linear genealogy (a vertical one) here, similar to Gen 5...showing a straight line from Shem to Abraham
- The following general pattern is repeated throughout this genealogy: *When A had lived x years, he fathered B. And A lived after he fathered B y years and had other sons and daughters.*
- Since this genealogy includes the age of the father at the birth of the next son in line, it must be a gapless strict chronogenealogy (like Gen 5)
- This is corroborated by the record of this genealogy in 1 Chronicles and Luke

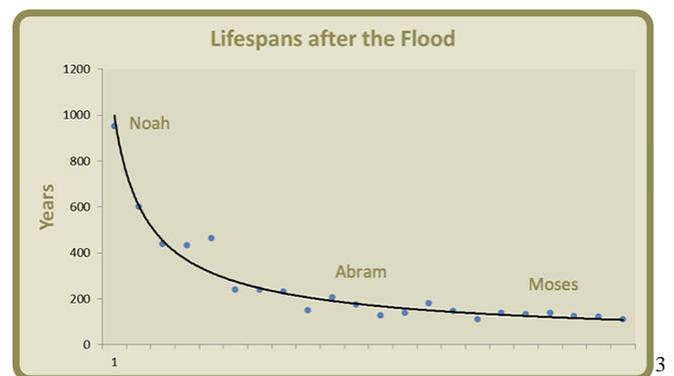
**1 Chronicles 1:24-27** ~ Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, 25 Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26 Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27 Abram, that is Abraham.

**Luke 3:34-36** ~ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,

- One notable observation in this genealogy is the lifespans of those who lived after the flood drop steadily
- Those who lived prior to the flood lived about 10 times longer than people do today



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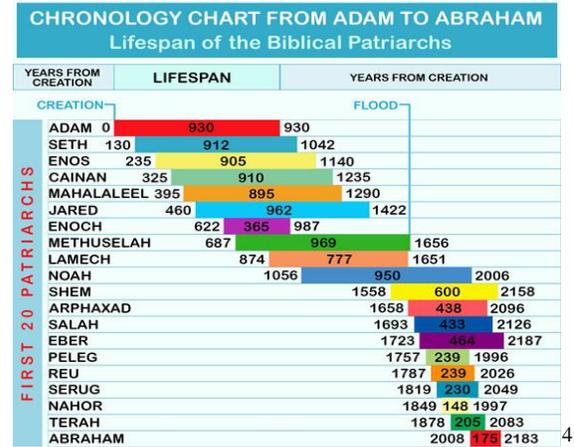


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<sup>2</sup> <https://creation.com/living-as-long-as-methuselah>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.icr.org/article/did-adam-really-live-930-years>

- Why the decreased lifespans? → many have suggested that the pre-flood world was a paradise which was destroyed in the flood and led to shorter lives
- However, Noah's lifespan wasn't shortened despite spending the last third of his life in the post-flood world; the decrease only started with his descendants
- Others have suggested that perhaps the falling of the water canopy around the earth at the flood led to increased UV exposure



- However, likely the best explanation is that the decay curve is just what would be expected from accumulation of mutations
- “The Genesis lifespans decline according to a well-defined *decay curve* that began immediately after the Flood...the biological decay curve found in these biblical texts matches biological decay curves known from the science of mutation accumulation. As mutations add up after every generation, they constantly erode genetic information.”<sup>5</sup>
- Thus, the change in lifespan was probably primarily caused by genetic causes whereby mutations accumulate in cells as they divide, making them less fit
- Adam and Eve were created with no mutations...so even after the fall, the first few generations of offspring were born with very few mutations
- However, by the time of the flood numerous genetic mutations would have accumulated
- This, coupled with a population bottleneck at the time of the flood, may have led to a decrease in genetic fitness
- A population bottleneck occurred when the human population was reduced from likely millions to just eight people
- As a result, most of the genetic diversity from before the Flood was lost
- The new human race descended from Noah and his family, who carried all the genes that were eventually passed down to us today
- “One of the problems with old-earth belief is that humans add over 30 new mutations every generation... This should cause an exponential decay in fitness. So if humans had been around for as long as evolutionists claim, we should have become extinct from the huge mutational load. That we have *not* become extinct is strong evidence that humans have not been here for longer than a few thousand years.”<sup>6</sup>
- One specific issue arises in connection with the genealogy recorded in Gen 11 and the one in Luke 3
- In Genesis 11:12-13, Arphaxad is said to be the father of Shelah, but Luke 3:35-36 says that Shelah was the son of Cainan who was the son of Arphaxad

**Luke 3:34-36** ~ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/chronology\\_adam-abraham.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/chronology_adam-abraham.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcreation.com%2Fliving-as-long-as-](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcreation.com%2Fliving-as-long-as-methuselah&psig=AOvVaw3nRE9sgbfCk3sgeh_UjCq7&ust=1643248019195000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAgQjR_xqFwoTCJjUw4umzvUCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD)

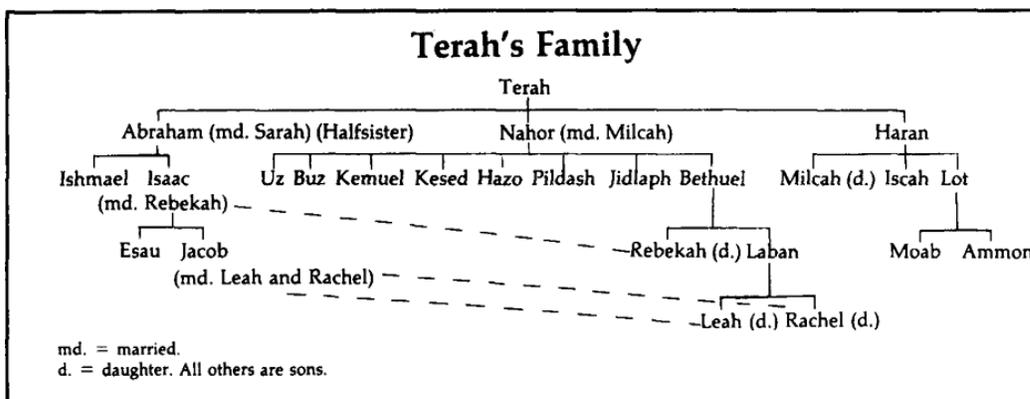
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- Which one is correct? → the best evidence is that Cainan was not in the original manuscripts of Gen 11 or Luke 3
- The extra name is most likely a well-known copyist error called *homoioteleuton* (i.e. “same ending”)
- It is important to remember that inspiration pertains directly to the original autographs, not the copies
- We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.” (The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy)
- So, the importance of the genealogy of Shem lies in the fact that it connects the generation who survived the flood with Abraham, something Israel at the time of Moses (who wrote this section) would have wanted to know
- This *toledoth* ends with the 3 sons born to Terah (v. 26)...there is good reason for mentioning all 3 names:
  - Abram is the father of the Messianic line
  - Nahor is an ancestor of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob
  - Haran is the father of Lot, the ancestor of the Moabites and Ammonites

## The Line of Terah

**Genesis 11:27-32** ~ Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. 28 Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29 Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30 Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31 Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. 32 The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

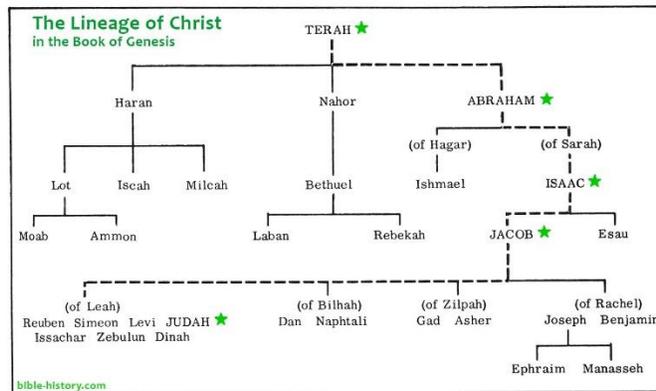
- These verses begin the next *toledoth* in Genesis (11:27-25:11)...the genealogy of Terah
- This genealogy is important in that it provides information on the ancestry of the 12 Tribes of Israel



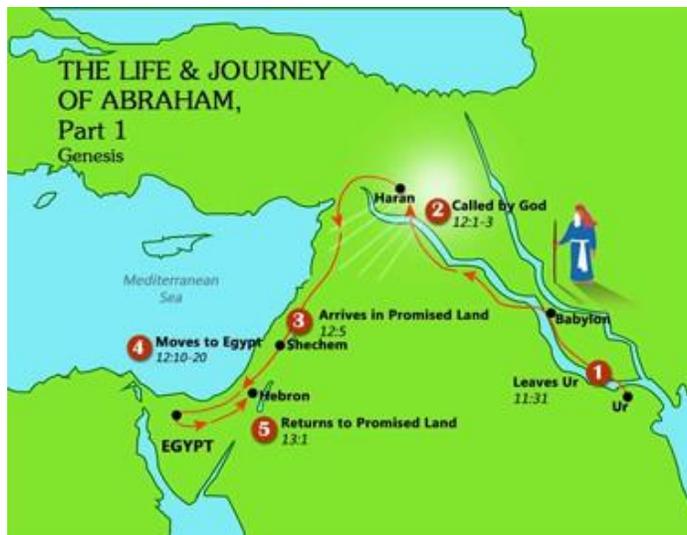
- It tells us that Haran had a son (Lot) and a daughter (Milcah)...Lot became his uncle Abram’s traveling companion...Milcah married her uncle Nahor
- It also shows that Isaac’s wife Rebekah was a granddaughter of Nahor...and that Jacob’s wives Leah and Rachel were great-grandchildren of Nahor (and daughters of Laban)
- We know that Terah was not a follower of the true God

**Joshua 24:2-3** ~ Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.’”

- It seems that until God called Abram, he also shared in his father’s idolatry (his salvation by faith did not come until Gen 15:6)
- The importance of this genealogy is that it demonstrates how the seed line continued from Shem to Abraham



- We also learn how Abram journeyed from his homeland of Ur to the Promised land, first leaving Ur with his father...then, after Terah died, leaving Haran for Palestine when God commanded him (Gen 12:1-3)

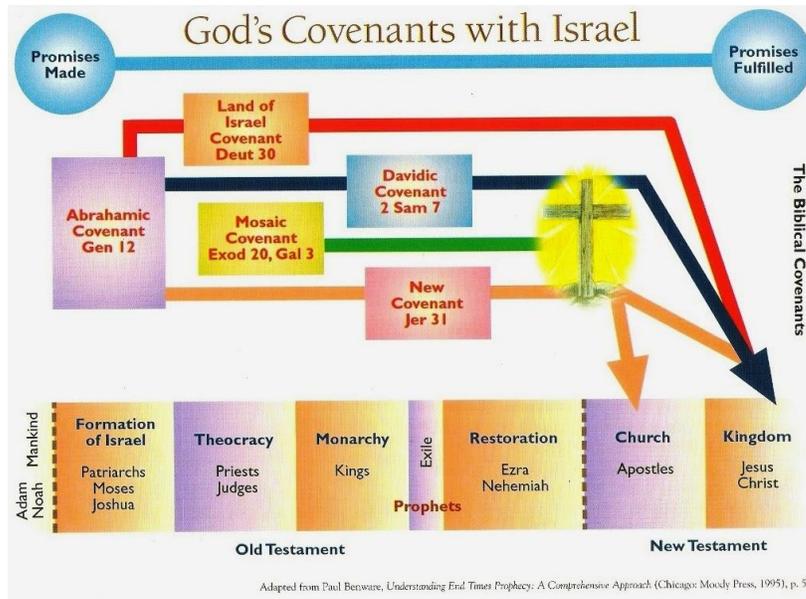


## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

- The Abrahamic Covenant is the “mother covenant” of God’s salvation plan
- A proper understanding of it is crucial for understanding God’s plans for the ages
- “It is recognized by all serious students of the Bible that the covenant with Abraham is one of the important and determinative revelations of Scripture. It furnishes the key to the entire Old Testament and reaches for its fulfillment into the New”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 139.

- “The Abrahamic Covenant undergirds the totality of the biblical revelation. Specifically elucidated in Genesis, its promises govern the pattern of all that follows in Exodus to Revelation... The Scriptures, from Exodus to Revelation, continually speak of one covenant between the LORD and Abraham.”<sup>8</sup>



- The foundations of the AC are found in Genesis 12:1-3

**Genesis 12:1-3** ~ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

- There were 3 basic provisions made in the AC...3 parties benefit from this covenant:
  1. Abraham
  2. The nation of Israel to come from Abraham
  3. The nations of the earth (Gentile groups)

## Personal Blessings (Seed) (Babies)

- God promised Abraham personally: v. 2 ~ And I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing
- He would also be blessed with many physical descendants

**Genesis 13:16** ~ I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

**Genesis 17:6** ~ I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

- Additionally, he would be the father of a multitude of nations

**Genesis 17:4-5** ~ As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Essex, “The Abrahamic Covenant,” in *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 10 (1999): 212.

- His name was changed from Abram (“exalted father”) to Abraham (“father of many nations”)

## National Blessings (Land) (Boundaries)

- God also promised Abraham that a “great nation” would come from him: v. 2 ~ Go...To the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation...
- The great nation of Israel would come from Abraham’s descendants
- They would be the owner of the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt to the river of Euphrates
- Thus, God guaranteed this great nation national existence, greatness as a nation, the land area of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and the continuation of the AC as an everlasting covenant

**Genesis 12:7** ~ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.”

**Genesis 15:18-21** ~ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

### The Abrahamic Covenant (promise)

□ **Genesis 15:18**  
On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates--



- The creation of the heavens and earth was to provide a place in which the reigning purposes of God for mankind would be carried out
- Man was tasked with ruling over the earth in general and the land of the Garden of Eden in particular
- When man fell, the ground worked against him and he was expelled from the first geographical area he was called to work in
- But the fall of Adam did not remove the necessity of a geographical region as the foundation of man’s functioning
- So as God’s plans for redemption narrow on Abraham and Israel, land will be of great importance and will become the focus of God’s reigning activity on the earth

## Universal Blessings (Blessing to All People) (Blessings)

- God does not stop with blessing just Abraham and Israel...all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham’s physical line of descent: v. 3 ~ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.
- This is the ultimate purpose of Abraham and the nation that would come from him...worldwide blessing!
- Abraham and Israel are not an end in themselves but they were to be channels of blessings
- Israel’s mission is linked with the world

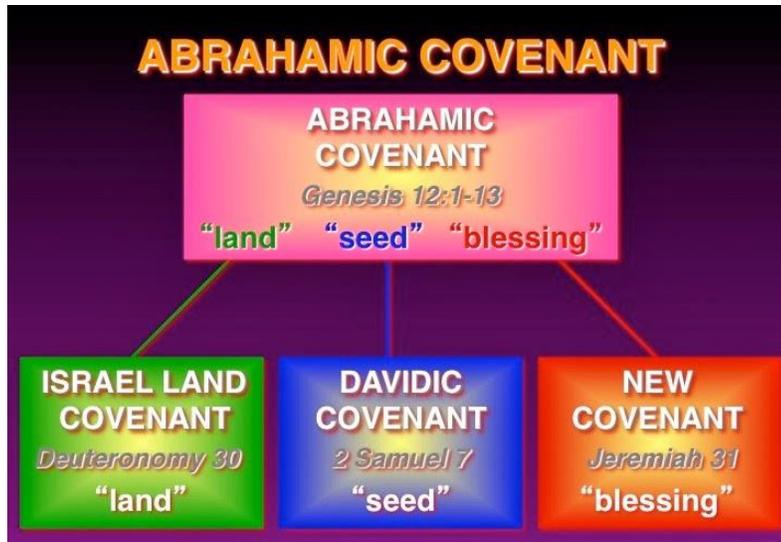
**Genesis 18:18** ~ since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?

**Genesis 22:18** ~ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice

- Thus, all nations would receive blessing through the physical descendants of Abraham
- “Grasping this truth of universal blessing through Israel helps with avoiding two errors. The first is thinking the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are only for Israel. The second error is assuming later Gentile

participation in the covenant means Gentiles will be incorporated into Israel. Both Israel and Gentiles will be related to the Abrahamic Covenant yet each will retain their ethnic identities.”<sup>9</sup>

- The relationship of the AC to the other covenants:



<sup>9</sup> Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 84.